

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

BBC →

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UK: CARRINGTON CONSIDERING ABOLITION OF BBC MONITORING SERVICE

LD270905 LONDON THE GUARDIAN IN ENGLISH 27 JUL 79 P 4 LD

(MARK ARNOLD-FOSTER REPORT: "BBC CUTS 'THREATEN' WORLD SERVICE")

(TEXT) MR PETER SHORT, SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY,
SAID YESTERDAY THAT IF LORD CARRINGTON CARRIES OUT HIS
THREAT TO REDUCE FOREIGN OFFICE PAYMENTS TO THE BBC,
THE INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING SERVICE'S STATUS WOULD
BE REDUCED TO BELOW THAT OF ALBANIA OR NORTH KOREA.

WHITEHALL SOURCES SAID THAT LORD CARRINGTON HAD ALSO
BEEN CONSIDERING THE ABOLITION OF THE BBC'S EXTERNAL
SERVICE MONITORING STATION AT CAVERSHAM PARK, READING,
WHICH PROVIDES DEFENCE DEPARTMENTS WITH MUCH OF THEIR
INTELLIGENCE. CAVERSHAM PARK COSTS ABOUT 4 MILLION POUNDS
STERLING A YEAR, THE AMOUNT LORD CARRINGTON WANTS TO SAVE,
ALTHOUGH ONE FIFTH COMES FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE.

MR SHORE AND THE FORMER FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTER
MR TED ROWLANDS SAID YESTERDAY THAT CUTS OF THE SIZE
PROPOSED IN THE BBC'S EXTERNAL SERVICES WERE "A
PATHETIC, INSULTING, AND DISGRACEFUL" WAY OF ACHIEVING
SUCH A "PETTY CUT IN EXPENDITURE." THE FOREIGN AND
COMMONWEALTH OFFICE SAID THAT LORD CARRINGTON WOULD
ANNOUNCE HIS DECISION ON WHICH SERVICES TO CUT IN A
WHITE PAPER IN THE AUTUMN.

THE EXTERNAL SERVICE'S MONITORING STATION AT CAVERSHAM
PARK HAS FOR DECADES MONITORED OVERSEAS BROADCASTS IN
ABOUT 40 LANGUAGES, WORKS ROUND THE CLOCK, AND EMPLOYS
ABOUT 400 ENGINEERS AND LINGUISTS. IT POOLS OUTPUT WITH A
SIMILAR ORGANISATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

THERE IS NO CERTAIN SIGN YET THAT LORD CARRINGTON OR
ANY OF HIS ADVISERS HAVE DECIDED THAT THE MONITORING
SERVICE OUGHT TO BE ABOLISHED.

HIS OTHER ALTERNATIVES ARE THE ABOLITION OF BBC
SERVICES TO ASIA, AFRICA, SOUTHWEST EUROPE AND LATIN
AMERICA, OR TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
IS LIKELY TO OBJECT STRONGLY TO THE ABOLITION OF
CAVERSHAM PARK.

--BBC STAFF YESTERDAY CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO
HALT THE PROPOSED CUTS. THE FEDERATION OF BROADCASTING
UNIONS, WHICH REPRESENTS ALL BBC STAFF, SAID THAT IF
THE CUT IN THE ANNUAL 45 MILLION POUNDS STERLING FOREIGN
OFFICE GRANT WENT AHEAD, THE BBC WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO
PROVIDE A WORLDWIDE RADIO SERVICE TO 75 MILLION LISTENERS.

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